

January 15, 1952

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Roy E. Norris
Field Secretary

SUBJ: MUL-UCDS Exploratory Visit to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on Impact of Defense Emergency and Significance for Industrial Developments in lower Bucks County with Special Reference to Negroes. December 12 to 14, 1951, inclusive.

ORGANIZED RELATIONSHIP OF PHILADELPHIA TO LOWER
BUCKS COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Officials of industry, labor, government, social agencies, and church groups are quite concerned about successive developments in the much-heralded growth taking place in lower Bucks County. Before many representatives are conferred with, an apparent feeling emerges that too many separate interests are active regarding, and in, that growth without good coordination or good chance of the best possible conditions resulting.

Industry-centered groups, including the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce (and the Pennsylvania State Employment Service, Philadelphia office), have a direct interest but feel removed geographically from very much direct participation for the present. These groups stand ready to serve as requested. At the moment they are in command of excellent specialized information.

Labor unions, principally the United Steelworkers of America, have been very active regarding scheduled job requirements for the United States Steel installations.

Certain offices of government groups, such as the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency, the Pennsylvania State Employment Service, and the Office of the U. S. Army Engineer, have been giving direct service to the Morrisville-Bristol area. The FHHA, after consultation and study, is understood to have issued directives regarding allocations for rentals and

purchases in specified income brackets with allocations for Negroes in each such category.

The Pennsylvania State Employment Service has conferred with representatives of lower Bucks County industries regarding employment needs, recruitment, etc. Other than employment for construction, principal efforts are projected for the future, when production will begin in the Fairless Works. The U. S. Army Engineer's office has been concerned with water-borne traffic for the area.

Central social agency representatives have a broad grasp of circumstances, and feel that national agencies, as those participating in the UCDS program, should provide the fundamental leadership. They find, moreover, a resolve of local residents in lower Bucks County to start their own social services, including a planning council and fund-raising organization, without the involvement of Philadelphia or Trenton leadership.

Church groups have gone into the Morrisville-Bristol area, chiefly with a concern about the establishment of churches--churching the growing population. However, no evidence was found of interest in the inclusion of Negroes.

These are only some of the basic interests and activities emanating from Philadelphia. The scope of activities is tremendous, as is the approximately \$1,450 million expansion going on in the lower Delaware River Valley.

However, Philadelphia is a difficult commuting distance from the Fairless Works and adjacent installations. To what extent would workers in Philadelphia undertake commuting? What surplus of workers may be found in Philadelphia? To what extent has Philadelphia been affected by the defense emergency? These questions can only be answered from a critical look at Philadelphia itself.

POPULATION

Between 1940 and 1950, the population of Philadelphia city increased by 7 per cent, from 1,931,334 to 2,071,600. Unrelated individuals--those with possibly least family hindrances to commuting--were 9 per cent of the city population.

During the same period, the population of metropolitan Philadelphia--more important in relation to Bucks County--increased by about 15 per cent, from 3,199,637 to 3,672,500. Females outnumbered males, the ratio dropping

from 97 males per 100 in 1940 to 91 in 1950. Sixty-five per cent of persons 14 years old and over were married; 25 per cent were single. Of the 844,000 married couples, 83,900, or 10 per cent, did not have their own household--were sharing the homes of others as relatives or lodgers--and might, conversations indicate, include a large number of persons wishing to move into the lower Bucks County development of homes and jobs.

The 1950 non-white population of the Philadelphia metropolitan area was 464,644, an increase of 43.9 per cent over 1940. Non-whites comprised 13.20 per cent of that 1950 population.

LABOR FORCE

The 1950 (Census) labor force of Philadelphia city was 888,500, relatively unchanged from 1940, with more men going to work outside the city limits. The ratio of males to females in the labor force dropped from 81 to 78 per cent, representing, also, more factory work being made available to females. The largest group of females in the labor force was those who were 20 to 24 years old.

In the metropolitan area, the labor force increased by about 9 per cent, from 1,406,590 in 1940 to 1,528,700 in 1950--1,044,000 males (or 78 per cent of all males 14 years old and over), and 484,700 females (approximately 32 per cent of all females 14 years old and over). Fifty-four percent of women in the labor force were between the ages of 20 to 24 years; 35 per cent between 25 to 54 years.

Since June, 1950, the outbreak of the Korean war, there has been some increase both in population and labor force, but all officials queried considered the population increase slight, and at a rate not very different from the post-war (World War II) trend.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Employment has been going up, and unemployment down, ever since the beginning of hostilities in Korea. This has not been true for all employment fields, but is definitely true in those fields first drawn into the war effort. The effect on the total economy of metropolitan Philadelphia has been definite.

fabricated metals, and electrical machinery, up, but not constantly. In other major industries employment was as follows: Leather, food, textiles and apparel, down; petroleum and coal products, up only slightly; and paper, printing and publishing, down slightly.

It is considered by the District office of the Pennsylvania Employment Service that the defense program is now completing phase I (representing plant product design and development), and entering phase II (representing extensive re-tooling and production).

Occupational needs are shifting away from engineering, drafting and designing, and drifting towards the skilled metal-working trades (as already in Connecticut), principally with emphasis on machine tool operations.

As to forecasts, Mr. Leonard A. Drake, Research Director, Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, stated in a copy of an address now already delivered before the Philadelphia Retail Controllers Association (December 13, 1951):

"Labor in the Philadelphia area will be scarce
(in the immediate future) and all too often
inefficient by past standards."

PRESENT JOB DEMANDS

Present needs for workers include engineers, designers and draftsmen of all classes (particularly aeronautical and electrical); machinists, tool and die makers and locksmiths; power sewing machine operators and appliance repairmen; secretaries, stenographers, typists and office machine operators.

Acute Shortages:

Needs which represent acute shortages include engineers, machinists, tool and die makers, machine tool operators, stenographers and office machine operators.

PRINCIPAL EMPLOYERS

There are at least 223 employers of 1,000 or more workers in the Philadelphia-South Jersey area. One hundred forty-two are in Philadelphia County. A list, complete with names and addresses, is deposited in the files of the surveyor in the Industrial Relations Department.

EMPLOYMENT VS WELFARE RELIEF

Another factor in the determination of extent of impact the defense emergency has had, is secured from an even casual study of properly arranged figures of the Philadelphia County Department of Public Welfare. In June of 1950, there were 2,013 new applications for help, the average caseload included 13,812 cases and 24,762 persons. By January of 1951, new applications had dropped to 1,809, and the average caseload had dropped to 11,030 and the number of persons to 17,403. In June of 1951, new applications totaled 880, and the average volume of cases for the month was 7,252, for 10,384 persons. The lowest point was reached in July when applications were 1,278, but cases only 6,716 and persons 9,466. As applications began a moderate advance in July, so did cases and persons in August: applications(August) 1,729, cases 6,790, persons 9,258. By December, the average caseload had gone up to 7,200, and persons to 9,303. This increase, beginning in July, was due to administrative changes--on January 1, 1951, Aid to Disabled Persons was begun, some 80 per cent of the cases came from the General Assistance caseload, and beginning in July, many A.D.'s were returned to General Assistance because of ineligibility for A.D. If both categories, A.D. and General Assistance, are lumped together, the downward trend shows up more constantly, indicating fewer and fewer persons receiving relief, or more persons finding income from the health of the local economy.

HOUSING

Detailed specifics on housing conditions for Philadelphians were not available. However, opinion did not vary as to the inadequacy of the local supply, both in terms of quality and quantity. Negroes are conceded to be worse off than whites.

In terms of the Bucks County developments, a larger proportion of Negroes than of whites would be in need of homes as well as jobs there, plus the fact that the quality and quantity of housing for Negroes in Philadelphia is not good enough to encourage commuting to the average job at the Fairless Works, for instance, for which the average Negro is qualified. The same 9 per cent of the Philadelphia population mentioned earlier as being "unrelated individuals", and living alone, includes large numbers of persons who could be expected to seek work in lower Bucks County, and spurred to do so because of Philadelphia's housing conditions. It is felt that Negroes in that group would, therefore, be seeking dwelling units as well as jobs.

No Negro was found who attempted to buy, lease, or rent a house built by Levitt or Galbraith (Gunnison Homes). However, concern is

raised by the alleged statement of a Levitt representative on the first Sunday showing of the Levitt Homes, advertised widely. The representative is supposed to have been asked by a white person to whom he had shown these houses; "I have a Negro friend who would probably like to buy one of these houses. Should he apply?" The alleged answer: "These homes are for whites only."

SOCIAL AGENCY ORGANIZATIONS

Philadelphia is highly organized along social agency lines. To some extent services are channeled, ultimately, into ethnic groups because of community housing and social patterns, though this is not the objective of any central social agency group. The fact that it does exist at all in any case creates a sort of vacuum regarding the problems of minority groups (principally, manifestations of racial discrimination) wherever they are not specially represented at over-all levels, or whenever there is not another representative present who will place their interests into the mainstream of consideration.

This throws a tremendous burden on those agencies that do have first-hand knowledge of and experience with the extra aspects of Negroes' social welfare problems. The Armstrong Association, with its small staff, is obviously barely able to carry its responsibility for Greater Philadelphia. With the emergence of lower Bucks County as an additional area looked to by Philadelphians, no agency program was found that can adequately cope with the increased scope of problems.

Certain other agencies and organizations, notably the American Friends Service Committee, and the Philadelphia branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, have attempted some activity in connection with Bucks County developments, in addition to their respective customary roles in Philadelphia. The A.F.S.C. has been represented in several meetings held in connection with problems of the Bucks County area; and one Quaker group, Judo (as identified by one official of another organization, to the surveyor), has offered to purchase a group of homes built by Mr. Levitt in order to re-sell them to Negroes, thereby assuring that some Negroes will be able to purchase homes in close proximity to the Fairless Works. The local chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. has been gathering information about jobs and housing in and around the Fairless Works.

SUMMARY

Philadelphia is highly organized, with leadership that is very conscious of developments in lower Bucks County. So far, study and definition of problems have been the main activity of Philadelphians regarding Bucks County, limited, mainly, by circumstances in Bucks County. Philadelphia social agencies and organizations are ready to help whenever possible and advisable.

Though the city has felt a sharp upturn in some employment fields as a result of the defense emergency, cutbacks in other employment fields have caused a large amount of job-shifting. The problem of housing in Philadelphia, worse for Negroes than for whites, is another factor that, when coupled with the volume of job-shifting, might well be considered in relation to Bucks County.

Occupational shortages are appearing and are just about the same ones the Fairless Works will have most difficulty in surmounting. Moreover, they are not representative of jobs for which the average or the majority of Negroes are qualified. Individual Negroes, then, in their attempts at self-advancement have the new jobs in Bucks County as escape-hatches--if they can get those jobs.

This does not overlook the need for efforts to heighten the local ceilings bounding those Negro workers. Here there is simply recognition of the inclination to take the line of least resistance; and in a brief study of Philadelphia in relationship to lower Bucks County in this regard, that line of least resistance is currently expected to lead to Bucks County. Large numbers of whites and Negroes, particularly large numbers of Negroes, will seek work there. The main deterrent for Negroes seems to be the problems of discrimination in housing, as voiced in allegations.

In January, 1951, total employment was estimated at 1,540,300 (by the Pennsylvania State Employment Service), which may be compared to a similar estimate of 1,462,300 at the same date in 1950. There was, then, an over-all employment rise of 5.3 per cent. For manufacturing wage and salary workers, the increase was 11.5 per cent, more than double the over-all increase.

Exactly one year after the beginning of the Korean war, weakness (generally prevalent over the country) in textiles, civilian radio and television equipment, in metal household furniture and in motor vehicles and related equipment, were contributing to drops in the upward movement of over-all employment. However, employment in the manufacturing of non-durable goods as a whole was about 13,000 higher in June of 1951 than in June of 1950. Employment progress in the manufacture of durable goods was entirely different. One year after "Korea", employment was up 19 per cent, a gain of some 42,000 workers--only the lumber and furniture industries failed to show higher employment (in the durable goods sector). The road upwards had been continuous since the fall of 1950 for primary metals, non-electrical machinery, and instruments.

By November of 1951, over-all non-government employment was falling off monthly--1.2 per cent between November 1, 1951 and mid-September, 1951. But durable goods manufacturing employment continued its expansion, with around 2,000 new workers a month in electrical machinery. Specific areas of continued increase were primary metals, machinery, transportation equipment, and instruments.

Unemployment in January of 1951 was 48 per cent less than in January of 1950. The estimate for mid-January, 1951, was 70,800; for May, 1951, 69,500; July, 1951, up to 88,900; September, 1951, down to 63,800; for October, 67,000. The over-all trend continues downward, changed mainly by seasonal lay-offs and cutbacks caused by material shortage and dropping off of production for civilian demand.

The Chamber of Commerce considers unemployment at the "irreducible minimum" (at 4 per cent); and that the only reservoir for additional labor is overtime.

OCCUPATIONAL TRENDS

On December 10, 1951, the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce released an economic bulletin which showed 3 of 6 war-aided industries' employment going constantly upward since November of 1950. Primary metals, transportation equipment, and machinery (except electrical), constantly up; chemicals,